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A SERMON,

PREACHED IN

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, MONTREAL,

ON THE

THIRTIETH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1836,

(ST. ANDREW'S DAY.)

BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER MATHIESON, A.M.

MINISTER OF THAT CHURCH, AND ONE OF THE CHAPLAINS OF ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY, MONTREAL.

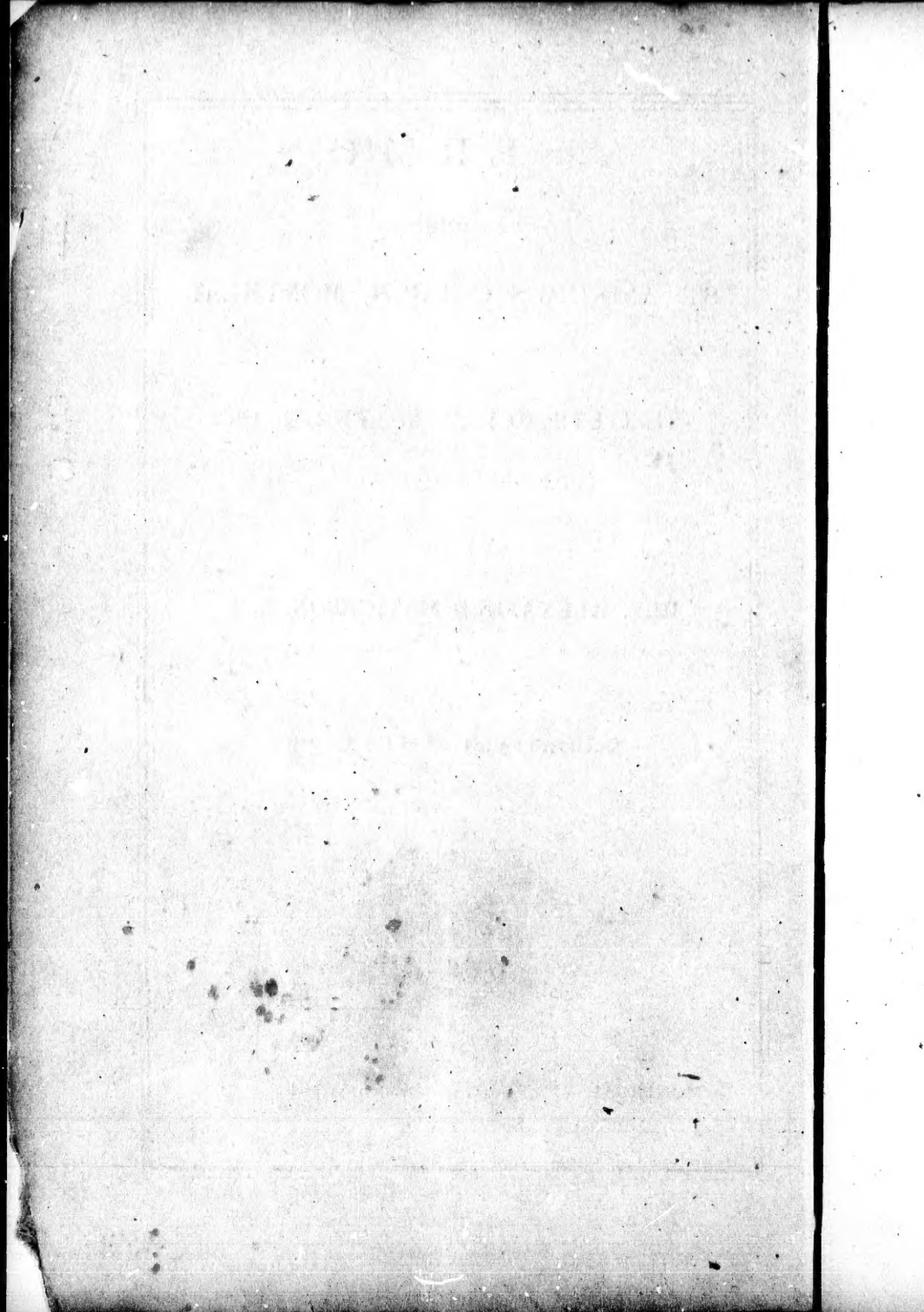
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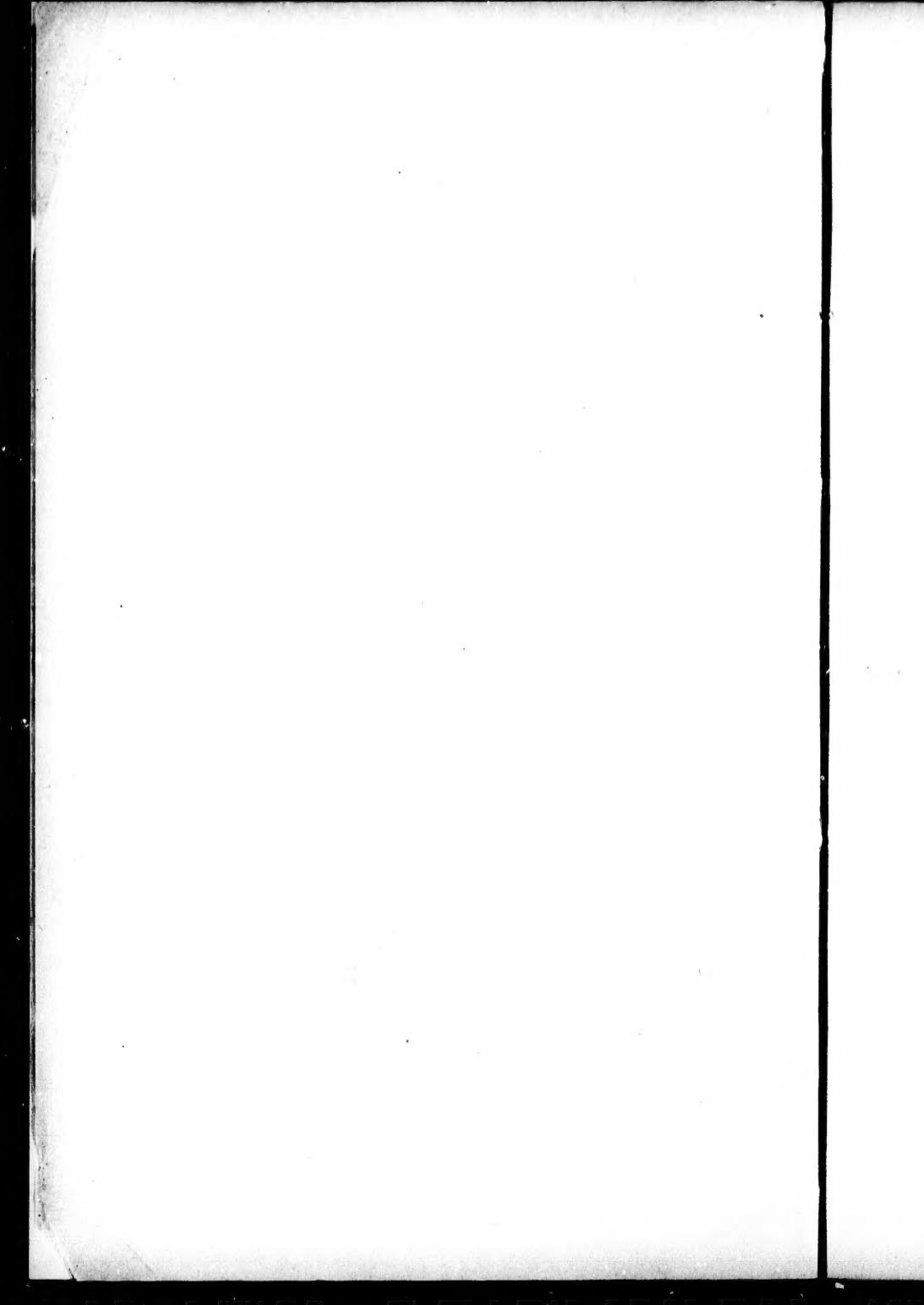
MDCCLXXXVII.

1837



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R. M. M. McEwen
With the Authors
Best Wishes

TO
THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE-PRESIDENTS,
THE MANAGERS, AND MEMBERS
OF
ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY, MONTREAL,
THIS SERMON,
PREACHED BEFORE THEM ON THE SOCIETY'S ANNIVERSARY,
AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY THEIR MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,
AND AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,
THE AUTHOR.

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PSALM CXXXVII. 1—6.

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

THERE is not a man of devotional taste or ordinary feeling, but must be charmed with the beauty, and sympathise with the sentiments expressed in this incomparable Psalm. With all the simplicity and pathos of the most exquisite poetry, is combined the fervour and spirit of the most exalted devotion. A powerful appeal is made to the tenderest emotions of the heart; whilst the most vivid picture of intense sorrow is presented to the intellectual eye. As with magic power, we are carried away to a far distant land—made to mingle in the scenes of a remote age, and share in the sorrows and sufferings of men, who have long since ceased to be inhabitants of this world. To the imagination are presented mournful groups of broken hearted captives, sitting in despairing grief o'er the recollection of former joys, and the remembrance of their far distant homes. Strangers to mirth, their harps, which had often been attuned to notes of gladness, hung on the willows, unheeded and unstrung. Every object around awakens the recollection of

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scenes from which they are now far removed—every incident increases the bitterness of their sorrow. Bending o'er the streams which glide away like their former joys, they mingle with its waters, fast flowing tears; for it brings to mind "Siloe's sacred brook," and the pleasant banks of the Jordan, which they despair of ever seeing again. If they raise themselves up from the downcast attitude of grief, through their tears they behold the distant towers and glittering palaces of hostile Babylon, and the towers of Salem, and the palaces of their much loved Zion, in the sad visions of memory, are presented to view. Alas! not as they once stood—the strength of the land—the joy and the beauty of the whole earth—but desolate and waste and crumbling into ruin, for the fire of an enemy hath passed through her bulwarks, and consumed her palaces. Her princes and people, who have survived her destruction, are carried away captives, and scattered in the land of their enemies; and the sad remembrance of her present degradation, and former glory, overwhelms their hearts with unutterable sorrow. It was not one, but a combination of circumstances that depressed the hearts of the captive Jews. All that was pleasing in the days of joyous youth—all that was noble and venerable in national character—all that was tender in friendship and subduing in love—all that was touching in domestic life—all that was lovely and picturesque in scenery, were combined to awaken the sentiments expressed in the text, "If

I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

But there was another element in their grief, which gave it a deeper complexion still, and a more intense character, than all that the remembrance of home or kindred or honorable name could impart. It was the remembrance of the hallowed ordinances of their religion, which, in a strange land, they no longer enjoyed. This was the bitterest ingredient in the cup of their sorrow. It was this, that gave poignancy to their affliction. However little they valued the services of the sanctuary when the visible emblem of the Divine presence shone from between the cherubim—however unthankful they were for the blessings of religion, when secure in the favor and protection of Jehovah, the surrounding nations viewed them with reverence and awe, and called them blessed; now that they are deprived of these pledges of divine love, they can properly estimate their value, and feel the awful loss which the removal of their privileges entails. This was the heaviest burden they had to bear, and they had to sustain it alone. There was no one to sympathise with them. From their spoilers they could expect no pity. To their God, they could not with confidence look for aid, for he had appointed unto them, as the only access to his throne, those

services of the sanctuary, which were typical of the new and living way opened up by the blood of the "Lamb of God." But these services had ceased. Their temple was laid in ruins ; and the Divine presence was withdrawn from the sanctuary. No longer were heard the sweet songs of praise, for the voice of the worshipper was mute, and the harps which had been used in the service of their God, now hung in disuse upon the willows which bent o'er the streams of a foreign land. Give a man of feeling and of piety but a realizing sense of the Divine presence in the hours of danger and distress, and they are immediately divested of their terrors and their gloom. Though ills should succeed ills as sparks in close succession—though every earthly pleasure should fail, and every worldly comfort be withdrawn—though afar from the land, the hallowed land, where the ashes of his forefathers repose, he should toil under the rod of a cruel master, and linger out a life of ignominious slavery, with his confidence stayed upon God, his spirit would be free. His body might be borne down beneath the overwhelming waves of affliction, but clinging to the "Rock of Ages," his soul would feel secure in every danger, and experience a sweetness of consolation mingled with the bitterness of every wo. But the captive Jews had no such support in the hour of their calamity. They had no token, that God still condescended to regard them as his chosen people. They had gone away from him, and unto him. they could

not again return in the way of his appointment. The very peculiarities of their religion, debarred them from the consolations which religion confers. It was in Jerusalem that the Lord had chosen to place his name. There alone, could the principal rites of their religion be performed, and the sacred songs of the sanctuary be sung. It would have imparted a deep and mournful delight to their hearts, could they have soothed the woes of captivity with the lovely lays of their native land. But this melancholy pleasure was denied them. These songs were sacred, and could not be sung out of the Holy City, far less to gratify the ears of idolatrous and hostile men ; and accordingly we find, when their "spoilers called for mirth, and bid them sing one of Zion's songs," that all the honest feelings of their nature, were awakened to a sense of the impiety of such a deed. Rather than violate the statutes of their God or desecrate those enraptured songs, that had only been employed in the praise of Jehovah, they preferred an utter forgetfulness of their delightful art, and that their tongue should be silenced forever. "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth : if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

The plaintive, yet ardent language of the inspired

poet, seems to intimate a still deeper insult offered to the captive Jews by their enemies. Their songs indeed were sacred, and therefore unfit to be sung before idolators or out of the city of the "Great King." The demand of their spoilers then, implied an insult to their religion and their God. But the occasion on which these holy lays were called for, aggravated the indignity. It was to gladden some festive hour that the captives were solicited to sing them. They that wasted them required of them mirth, and bid them sing one of Zion's songs. The sounds of revelry and mirth are ever discordant to the ears of the sorrowful. The afflicted soul has no sympathy with them, and retires, to brood in solitude over its woes. Such hours of retirement have been always held sacred to sorrow, and intrusion has been deemed profane. It was therefore, worse than insulting—it was cruel—to call the weeping captives of Judah to take part in what was so repugnant to their feelings. But this was not all. It is more than probable, from the indignant tone in which they resented the insult, and their pathetic allusions to Zion, that they were called to mingle their sacred songs, with the wild and impious orgies of an idol god. If it were so, we cannot wonder at the intensity of their grief. Touching and plaintive as the exclamation is, which they poured forth in the overflowing fulness of their hearts, "O how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land," it but faintly expresses the anguish

which they would feel, when such an insult was offered to all they held sacred. But though the intensity of their sufferings drew from their lips the language of complaint, yet it was not the expressions of weak, timorous, irresolute men they used—no, it was the mild, but firm language of men, whose generous souls sorrow could melt into tenderness, but could not reduce to base and unprincipled submission. It was the complaint of men who had known what it was to taste the sweets of happiness; but whom neither the allurements of luxury, nor the enticements of vice could seduce from the faith of their fathers—men, whom the prospect of suffering and death could not deter from openly avowing allegiance to the living God. The picture which the psalmist gives, in the succeeding verses, of their noble bearing, and high resolves under their distresses, is truly animated and sublime. He represents them as rising up from the downcast attitude of sorrow, and assuming the posture of noble defiance to every temptation—as hastily dashing off their tears, and forgetting their bondage, and putting on the unconquerable resolution of adhering intrepidly to the faith and worship of their fore-fathers; and, if ever by their apostacy, they should bring disgrace on their religion or dishonour on their God, solemnly invoking the vengeance of insulted heaven on the daring hand, and on the impious tongue, that would awaken on their soft toned harps, one note, or chaunt one of Zion's songs, except in the worship of Jehovah.

" O ! how in stranger climes can we
 Pour forth Jehovah's melody ?
 When thou, loved Zion, art forgot,
 Let this unworthy hand decay ;
 When Salem is remembered not,
 Mute be these guilty lips for aye !
 Yea, if in transport's liveliest thrill,
 Thou, Zion, art not dearer still."

The scene of distress which the inspired poet thus, so forcibly delineates, and such dignity under suffering as he describes, awaken at once the commiseration and respect of every virtuous mind. The imagery is so harmonious, and the allusions are so tender, they speak home to the best feelings of the heart. But besides the power with which this exquisite composition addresses our fancy and feelings—there is also such a moral grandeur pervading it—there is such a lofty and devoted piety breathing in every line of it, that we cannot give way to the emotions it is fitted to awaken, without experiencing the most salutary influences on our own hearts.

My brethren ! in order to prevent those moral and religious impressions, which the serious consideration of this beautiful psalm, will naturally leave on the mind, from being evanescent—from being the lovely but unfruitful sentiment of poetic enthusiasm merely, it will be necessary to incorporate them with your personal interests. I crave your indulgence, then, while I shall very briefly advert to some circumstances

in your condition, which will, in several respects, assimilate it to that of the captive Jews, by the rivers of Babylon.

It is true, we groan not under the oppressive sway of a tyrannical monarch. We live under the mild reign of a King—God save him—who is the father of his people. We enjoy the blessings of a Government which, in its form and administration, has justly been the object of universal admiration—the foundations of which were laid, and its superstructure reared, by men, who knew and who could appreciate true liberty. We are permitted to worship God according to our consciences; and our charter to this invaluable privilege, is ratified in the blood of our pious ancestors; and in God's great name, we will defend it, to the last drop of our own. But, like the Jews, we are afar from the land of our birth. Although, in many respects, we may have nothing to regret in our expatriation, yet it would neither indicate delicacy of feeling nor dignity of mind, that, afar from the scenes associated with some of our purest feelings and happiest days, we never "cast a longing, lingering look behind." It is in vain we may attempt to forget them; for no attachment is so deeply rooted in the heart, as that which binds us to our father-land, and no remembrances are so sweet, as of the days of our youth—they will cling to us wherever we go—they will abide with us until our dying day. Our hearts

must be utterly dead to all the finer feelings of our nature, ere the associations of our early home, cease to move it. However long we may be absent, or however permanently we may suppose ourselves to be domiciled in distant climes, we still bestow upon that beloved land, where the ashes of our fathers repose, the endearing appellation of Home. Other lands may be pranked out in the gayer adornments of nature, or may boast of more fertile fields; but in no other land can we find those objects and those images, that enter as essential elements into our ideas of the domestic happiness, and comfort, and affection, to which the word Home gives expression. The sun in other climes may shine in more cloudless skies, but he shines not on that gorgeous magnificence of clouds and mountains and torrents, or on the unpruned and romantic wildness of hill and dale, which, My Countrymen! chiefly constitute the physical features of our native land, and the absence of which, renders all other scenery "foreign to the heart and unco to the ee." The birds which sing around us, are not those that delighted our childhood. The flowers, which spring beneath our feet, are not those, that deck, with their modest blossoms, the graves of them we loved.

" If we could see the lane kirk-yard,
 Whar frien's lie side by side;
 An' think, that we could lay our banes
 Beside them when we died.

Then we might think this forest hame,
 An' in it live and dee;
 Nor feel regret at our heart's core,
 Our native land, for thee."

I will not attempt to analyze those feelings, which local allusions awaken in the bosoms of those, who have been long absent, or are far distant, from their native homes. Within the compass of a brief discourse, in which many other topics demand our attention, I could only give you but a meagre outline,—present you with a dry and sapless skeleton, denuded of the attractive charms of diversified thought and illustration. Suffice it to say, then, that attachment to the land of our birth, is the offspring of those generous and benevolent affections, which the Deity hath implanted in the human breast, for the production of our happiness, the improvement of our nature, and the preservation of that social system, under which we live. It may be modified, by an infinite variety of circumstances, but it will be always found more or less strong in every breast, yet always purest in the breast of the Christian. With some men, as among the ancient Romans, it may become a sublime, but a most pernicious principle, destructive of all the charities of domestic life, and incompatible with the exercise of justice and humanity, towards all, of a different nation. But in the Christian's heart, it holds that place which entitles it to rank amongst the highest virtues that adorn humanity. The divine religion of Jesus, by inculcating uni-

versal good will to man, and prescribing, under the most solemn sanctions, the cultivation of those amiable and benevolent affections from which the love of country springs, hath laid a solid foundation, for the well regulated exercise of this virtue, in the principles of our constitution. Nor is the universal philanthropy which christianity prescribes, inconsistent with the stronger exercise of the benevolent affections in particular cases. The Christian, while he regards the great family of mankind as his brethren, feels his heart more strongly knit towards some than others. The enjoyment of the same civil rights and privileges—the bonds of a common faith—the natural ties of consanguinity—the reciprocation of kind offices will all give a greater energy to the benevolent feelings. Christianity does not alter or impair the original principles of our constitution; but elevates and purifies them. It gives the sanction of heaven, to those laws, which human wisdom hath framed, for the general benefit of the community. It lays us under the most sacred obligations to preserve unimpaired, those civil and religious institutions, which the wisdom of our ancestors has founded, and the utility of which long experience has attested. By the most affecting of all considerations, (the death of the ever blessed Redeemer,) making us know that we are the beloved, though erring and guilty children of God, it binds us, by our common faith and worship, more closely to our common Parent, and to each other. Elevating the

gentler sex to that station which heaven has designed they should fill, and blending, with the instincts of nature, the lofty inspirations of heaven, it has given an unearthly beauty—a celestial purity, to maternal love. By the wise appointments of Providence, we are thrown into the midst of those powerful influences in the morning of life, when the young heart is most susceptible of deep and tender impressions—when its affections are warmest, and its piety is purest. Our hearts, then swell with sympathetic triumph at the relation of the noble deeds, achieved in defence of our country, its liberty and laws. It is then, that with sentiments of the profoundest reverence and awe, we mingle with the worshipping multitudes in God's own house—they may be transient, as might be expected in such an age; but they have less of the world blended with them, than when our minds are more matured. It is then, with a fulness of affection we can never afterwards experience, that we return that parental love, the holy influences of which, are continually shed upon us; but the tenderness and depth of which, we can never fully comprehend. It is these spring-tide feelings that enchain our hearts to our native land. Every object, in the remotest degree connected with them, is identified with the delight they convey. It becomes so thoroughly incorporated with them, that they can never afterwards be separated. An allusion to the one, brings before the imagination the other, in all the freshness of youthful pleasure.

Thus it is, that Christianity, by sanctifying and enobling the primary affections of the human heart, binds us, by a sacred and indissoluble band, to the altars and home of our sires. By purifying the fountain from which patriotism flows, our early draughts are made so delicious, that they diffuse a healthful energy through the whole frame.

We may not know the full power of that invisible chain which binds us to our native home, so long as the scenes of youth are daily before our eyes, and the companions of our childhood are still around us. But alter our relative position—place us on a distant shore—let the “troubled sea” roll its billows between us and them—O it is then that we feel how dear to the heart is all that we have left behind us. “Often will the memory of other times, come like the evening sun, o’er the soul.” In thought we will revisit those scenes that still smile to us, in all the brightness of youthful pleasure. The very stones and dust of our country will be dear to us. As of Zion it will be said of it “this man and that man was born there.” It will be enough to commend him to the best affections of the heart, that he hath breathed her mountain breezes, and trod the sacred soil of her valleys. We will love him as a brother. We will love, as “trusty friends,” the men of other lands, who participate in our emotions. If ever a harsh feeling had place in our bosoms it will be immediately withered, and the sentiments of “brotherly

kindness and charity," essential to the happiness and improvement of every community, will be greatly strengthened, and exert a more unfettered influence over the whole conduct.

The sentiments which national associations awaken, will be called into more powerful action, by social sympathy. The effect on the individual will not only be greater, but the general impression produced, will be much more lively and lasting. As in a concert, it is not the tone of one instrument, however exquisitely brought out, that delights us—it is the rich, full harmonious union of the whole, that thrills the soul and leaves a feeling of satisfaction, long after the melody has died upon the ear. So the blending emotions of many minds will elevate the tone of feeling into glowing enthusiasm, and leave a strong and durable impression on every heart.

It is on this principle that we may reasonably expect many advantages to result from those National Societies that have been recently formed, for cherishing brotherly love and kindly feeling, and preserving in memory, all that is great and good in the characteristics of the country, to which the members respectively belong. Meeting once a year to commemorate their national virtues, they will become better acquainted with each other. They will feel that they are indeed brethren. Heart will meet heart on a full and flowing tide of

generous sympathy. Hand will grasp hand in the firm gripe of trusty friendship. A manly independence will glow in every bosom, as lovely to the friends of freedom and humanity, as the bloom of Scotia's Thistle—as formidable to all who would enslave the lofty energies of the mind, as its head, "spiked and bristled," is to the reckless hand—and the glorious sentiment, *My Countrymen!* which forms your motto, will then too, find an active expression, as sweet, both to the reliever and the relieved, as the fragrant breath of your own leather bells on the mountain breezes.

The annual commemoration of a country's glory—the observance of a day, when her expatriated sons, all over the world, return, in thought, to the homes of their youth, must be attended with signal advantages. In recalling to mind the piety and virtue of their ancestors, and their noble achievements in the cause of virtue and humanity, their own piety will grow warmer—their virtue stronger. They will be prepared to act the same manly part, which they, who have gone before them have acted, and they will more firmly resolve, to defend, till their latest breath, those sacred and civil rights which were bequeathed to them as a glorious legacy. Nay, their very sorrows will catch a tinge of melancholy pleasure from the light reflected from the land endeared to them, by many fond recollections. I confidently ask, are the sons of Scotland likely to degenerate, by the vivid remembrance of

the scenes and feelings of early life? Are they likely to be less firmly attached to the faith, or to hold in less respect the virtues, which gave unsurpassed beauty and sublimity to the character of their Fathers? Are they likely to become less sensible to moral excellence, that once every year they should, even in imagination, enter beneath their paternal roofs,—or repair to the green graves of those, whom of all on earth, they loved best, to water them with their tears?

There is a sublimity in the idea (which will impart a corresponding elevation to the sentiments,) of a multitude of minds, trooping from every quarter of the habitable globe, and meeting on the spot, by them, the most beloved of all on its vast surface, to hold delightful communings with the great and the good of past ages, and recall to mind the distinguishing events of their nation's history. Reminiscences, such as these, will not only awaken in the bosoms of the individuals themselves, feelings of deeper piety and benevolence, but will have also a beneficial influence on the institutions of their adopted country, and the future character of its population.

It is a curious problem that is evolving in the political and moral history of North America. In an age when the arts and the sciences, have been brought to a high pitch of perfection.—When human enterprise has dared and done every thing that it was possible for

mortals to do.—When each nation in the world, has achieved something peculiar to the genius of its people, an arena is opened up, by Providence on this extensive continent, for a display of the united exertions and combined improvements of the whole world. Here, from every clime under heaven men continue to come. Here, the literature of Europe shines in unclouded splendour. Here, the arts and the sciences are imported in the pride of their strength. Every Nation lends its intellectual might, and its physical energies, to the formation of the character of that race, that is destined to succeed the present generations, and to people those vast tracts, where undisturbed solitude and silence still reigns. And what ingredients shall Scotland throw into this caldron of enchantment, if we may use the expression? What shall she contribute to the formation of the character of the future possessors of the land? Shall it be that wildly romantic enthusiasm, which her fairy legends, her poetry and song, have enkindled in the bosoms of her children? Shall it be that independence of spirit, and keen perception of civil and religious freedom, which was inspired and cherished, amidst the many vain attempts that were made to conquer and enslave them? Shall it be that intelligence, that piety and virtue, which her ecclesiastical establishment, and that kindred institution, or rather, I should say, that part and parcel of her ecclesiastical establishment—her Parochial Schools have fostered? Shall

it be those moral and religious habits, which make her loved at home, and revered abroad? If these be elements of character, worthy of being cultivated by a great nation, then, my Brethren, every institution fitted to preserve and give effect to the reminiscences of our native country, is a patriotic institution. If our National Societies have a tendency, which they unquestionably have, to give a complexion to the intellectual and moral character of the future inhabitants of these Provinces, by transfusing into it what is good and great of the mental characteristics of their own countries; then, I may affirm, that the days on which their corner stones were laid, were auspicious days to the community at large. And if the purposes contemplated by your association, are followed out in the spirit of Christian prudence and charity, future generations shall rise up and call you blessed.

My Brethren! I speak not to one class among you—I speak unto all. My allusions may be more frequent and more pointed to the Nation peculiarly distinguished in the solemnities of this day; but my remarks, in their spirit, are alike applicable unto you, from whatever country you come. And I know you will indulge me, if, upon *this day*, my allusions should be somewhat exclusive—if I should rather “lead you to the sound of my woods and the roar of my mountain streams,” than linger with you near “the soft flowing Avon,”

by the tomb of the "sweetest child of fancy", or wander with you "on the green banks of the Shannon," or on "the vine clad shores of the sunny Rhine." Believe me, in all sincerity I speak, when I say for myself, that it is with no view to detract from their glory, or in the slightest degree to disparage the magnanimous Nations, whose representatives I see before me, that I speak with enthusiastic pride of my own—and, I am sure, with all confidence I may say, for my countrymen, that they bear a willing testimony to the genius, the valour, and the virtue of the illustrious Nations whose sons, in brotherly union, are met to commemorate this day; and that they love them the more ardently for their sympathy. If it be reckoned a weakness to dwell on the institutions of my country and the habits of her people, I am persuaded it will be pardoned by those, who can boast of similar institutions and kindred virtues—by those whose noble generosity is unmatched in the annals of time—by those whose hearts are the repositories of concentrated kindly feeling.

In casting a retrospective eye on our native country, we will, for the present, overlook her chivalrous spirit; we will hardly bestow a passing glance, on her moral and intellectual greatness—so admirably delineated by him who, on a similar occasion, last addressed you. The spirit of the text, rather leads us to reflect, on the unspeakable value of religious ordinan-

ces, and their essential connection, with a people's welfare, and a country's greatness.

There is no one, who is at all sensible of the benefits of religion, who would not lament the deprivation of its solemn rites, as the bitterest calamity, that could happen to him on this side of the grave. The Hebrew captives were deeply sensible of the loss they had sustained, in this respect. Whatever their imaginations would combine in one picture of the calamities of slavery—the loss of their country—the dishonour of their nation—the ruin of their families, and the violation of their temple, must have been presented to their minds, when their foes, exulting over their wrongs, demanded one of the songs of Zion;—but it was the loss of their religious privileges, they chiefly bewailed. Their affection for Zion, absorbed every other feeling; and the thought, that it was laid low in the dust, diffused over their souls, a spirit of deep concentrated grief.

The delightful hope, that the days of their captivity would come to an end, and that yet, they would be permitted to worship God, in the "beauty of holiness," was shaded by their reflections on the moral degradation, which would necessarily result, from the cessation of their religious rites. Their language, in the text, betrays an anxious fear, lest they should be induced, amidst the corrupting influences of an idola-

trous land, to forsake the faith and worship of their fathers. Their danger certainly was great; but they had the powerful associations connected with their native country, to counteract the seductive influences which surrounded them; and we find, that with the thoughts of their home, the feelings and energy of better days return, and in the glowing ardour of devotional attachment, and unswerving faith, they formed the high resolve—never, never to forget Jerusalem.

My Countrymen! I know no fear we may more reasonably entertain, than that of religious defection—no sentiments so peculiarly becoming us to cherish, as the descendants of a renowned and pious people, as a devoted attachment to the altars of our country, and the sanctuary of our God. Need I remind you, that we live in most portentous times,—times, pregnant with great events; but whether for weal or for wo to man, can only be known, when the veil of futurity is lifted up. That fearful excitement,—that restless mental energy, which distinguishes the age, must result in some mighty change. Whilst there are some things, that lead us to hope a favourable issue, there are many things that lead us to fear, that the ultimate triumph of truth and holiness, will be ushered in amidst “much tribulation.” The impatience which men betray, under the salutary restraints of all established systems of government, whether civil or ecclesiastical,—the reckless affectation of mental

independence which has infected so many, and makes them spurn both the counsels of experience, and inspiration,—the tame and servile spirit, which has fallen upon many more, that makes them bend their necks, especially in matters of religion, to the tyrannical power of fashion or personal interest, are ominous of evil. It is indeed consolatory to reflect, that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and that from the conflicting elements of human passion, he will elicit good.—But at the same time, we have reason to fear, that the morning light of peace and felicity is not nigh, and that we have yet to pass through a long night of tempest and of gloom.

The principles of the Gospel alone can produce happiness and peace ; but these are not the principles which influence the schemes that are now proposed for the improvement of society. The dictates of inspiration are set aside, and the miserable devices of a present expediency reverentially followed. It cannot be denied, that the spirit of the age, is any thing but a Christian spirit. It is a spirit of intellectual might and energy, but of religious indifference. There is a rage for novelty and innovation,—a fondness for speculation and theory,—an extreme aversion to be guided by the sober dictates of experience—a still greater aversion to be taught by the revealed Word of the Living God. A spurious liberality is extolled, the tendency of which, is to destroy all the distinctions

that exist, between what is true, and what is false in religion,—between what is spiritual, and what is superstitious,—between what is rational, and what is fanatical. All modes of worship, and all points of faith, are regarded as equally entitled to respect, and an equality of rights and privileges, are claimed for men of all sects and denominations, let their opinions and principles be what they may. Old and admirable institutions would be swept away, merely, because they are old, and present the most formidable barriers, to the encroachments of licentious opinions. Men seem, as if they were just awakening from a dream, in which many precious and beautiful things floated in the fancy ; but being airy phantoms, they are willing, that they should be forever forgotten. They seem to regard all that has pleased or benefited them in the past, as mere delusions, which could find a place, only, in the dark night of ignorance ; but are utterly unfit to be seen in the clear light of the intellectual day, which is just beginning to dawn on a benighted world.

While the minds of men are thus deeply and generally imbued with a spirit hostile to all old institutions, it would be surprising indeed, if the ecclesiastical establishments of the Empire were spared, in their reckless zeal for innovation. The religious institutions of a nation, if founded on truth, are its strongest bulwarks. They give a healthful tone to the "body

politic," while they present the most formidable barriers to the encroachments of error and of vice. The wisest and best of men, in all ages, accordingly, have deemed the intimate connection of their civil and religious institutions, at once as the highest glory and greatest privilege of their nation; and the disruption of the bond which united them, they have regarded as the certain prelude to its downfall. It has, therefore, been their study, to incorporate their religion with the National constitution, and to guard with sacred care, such a union when effected;—while on the contrary, to destroy it, has always been the first and persevering endeavour of "those who are given to change," with whom, it may be remarked, the wisest of men cautions us "not to meddle."

The countenance and support, which our own beloved Zion, has received as a National Institution, has aroused the indignation of her enemies—and as might have been expected, in these times of change and excitement, she has been exposed to the fury of the storm of abuse that has been raging. Her slender resources—her prudent expenditure—yet her admirable efficiency to all the purposes of a Christian Church, ought to have turned aside the arms of her assailants, had their object been simply the extension of Christian truth; but the result has been so widely different, that the unhallowed strife, has raged around her towers, with a fury proportioned to her excellence and utility. It

is with painful feelings, when inquiring what "tidings from afar," that we have to listen to the narrative of her wrongs. It is with sadder feelings, we learn that many, whose fathers were nursed in her bosom, and who have derived from her, all that they enjoy of Christian liberty, forgetful of what they owe to her, have "shot at her their arrows." Instead of standing in the breach, and lending their aid to repel their common foe, envious of her glory, they have like the children of Edom in "Jerusalem's evil day," joined her enemies, and raised the cry, "rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." We will not pray, Lord, remember them in the day of vengeance. In the meek spirit and affectionate language of our Divine Master, we will say, "Father, forgive them: they know not what they do." O surely they know not! for could they see all the misery and guilt, which the accomplishment of their designs would inevitably bring upon the land, they would stay their impious hand,—for wo! wo! is to my Country, when her Zion is laid low. Her Church is associated in the hearts of her people, with every thought and sentiment of religion. It is entwined with every glorious recollection of the past—it is identified with every present blessing—it is blended with every hope of future delight. These associations, must, from their very nature, give religion a firmer hold of the heart. Yet, supported as it is, by many tender recollections, and pleasing hopes, we are apt to forget its claims; and were these

links broken, which connect our church, with all that is great in our nation's history, and all that we can hope of future improvement, we might well dread we would soon not only forget our Zion, but the great purposes also, which religious institutions are designed to effect. And would any Scotchman, in whose heart, a single patriotic feeling remained, throw the withering blight of irreligion over the land, by destroying those associations, without which we have much reason to fear, neither a Church nor a Sabbath, would long exist among us.

The National blessings, which our venerable Establishment, has been the means of conveying to all classes of the population, entitle it, to the respect and gratitude of every Scotchman, whatever may be the sect to which he belongs. Envy, or jealousy, or baser passions, must have withered every nobler sentiment, in the breast of the man, who can contemplate the many and great benefits, which Scotland—nay which the whole earth, has derived from her Church, and yet would rejoice to see it laid low in the dust. Is it not to her Church, that under God, Scotchmen owe all that honourably distinguishes them—their intelligence—their virtue—their piety? Was it not her Church that kept alive the spark, and cherished the flame of true liberty, in times of peril and oppression? Does she not still guard with jealous care, that freedom, which by a system of just and necessary res-

traints, secures to every man, the full and free enjoyment of his rights? Who, founded these schools and colleges, which has given Scotland a pre-eminent renown all over the earth, and which qualifies her sons, for filling with success, every office in which they may be employed? Who, with disinterested zeal, struggled to rescue from the rapacious hands of the great and powerful of the land, a portion of her own patrimony, that she might provide with it, the blessings of a enlightened and Christian education to the poorest of the people? Who is it that still watches with paternal affection over the young and rising generation, and almost singly and alone, puts forth her efforts, to extend still further the benefits of education? Who is it, that now struggles to preserve from the contaminating touch of irreligious men, those seminaries which she has founded and fostered, and which as necessary to the success of their designs, they endeavour to wrest from her inspection and controul? The answer to all these questions, is, our National Church. She has even contributed indirectly to the success of those measures, for the diffusion of evangelical religion and enlightened education, that did not originate with herself. Stimulated by her example and encouraged by her success, energies have been awakened, that would have slumbered forever in darkness—and many have proceeded in the path of successful enterprise, who would have never entered upon it, had she not both smoothed its asperities, and led the way. Nor has

she, indirectly, been less influential in defending the privileges, than in promoting the improvement of such as belong not to her communion. Her alliance with the State gives stability and strength to her institutions, while at the same time, by her happy constitution, she is equally removed from the domination of the prince, and the vicious influence of the multitude. Nothing, has she more resolutely and stedfastly disowned, than a right in the one to intermeddle with the management of her spiritual affairs. Nothing has she guarded against with more sedulous care, than the rude and unthinking interference of the other. This independence renders her loyalty the tribute of grateful affection—her piety, the homage of a devout and thankful heart. Rooted in the affections of the great mass of the people, and favored as she is by the blessing of the Most High God, she cannot be easily shaken by the capricious movements of the times. She stands a tower of strength in the midst of the land, and presents an insurmountable barrier both to the encroachments of irreligion and the usurpations of power, which would soon overwhelm a divided and a less numerous body, and frowns contempt, on those disgusting exhibitions of fanaticism and folly, to which rival sectaries invariably have had recourse in their proselytizing zeal, or to preserve their influence with the unenlightened multitude. The stability which she enjoys, imparts a corresponding security to the best interests of all who come within the sphere of her influence. Extinguish

her light, and speedily darkness would cover the land, and gross darkness the people. Those lesser stars which shine around her would emit a paler and more ineffectual ray; and soon would their now boasted splendour be quenched in deepest gloom. Let him profess what form of worship, and follow what mode of discipline he may, there is no Scotchman but owes much to the Established Church of his country; and he must forget all the honourable distinctions of a Scotchman, ere he can forget his obligations. Every high and holy affection must be eradicated from his heart, ere he cease to revere that Church, which has for ages proved so efficient in promoting the moral and spiritual well-being of the people.

I have detained you long, my Brethren! and I fear, I would but exhaust your patience, while I would but ill requite that deep attention, with which you have favored these remarks, were I now to protract them. Fain would I crave your indulgence for a little longer, while we might walk together about our Zion, to tell her towers and mark her bulwarks and consider her palaces; but on a subject so pregnant with useful observation, I dare not, at this late period, enter. Yet, before we part, let us cast one fond look on the land we love—on that beautiful land, which like a star on the ocean, radiates her glory to the utmost ends of the earth. How grand, picturesque and beautiful her external features! Poor she is,—yet in her poverty

surpassing rich in the more enviable possession of moral and intellectual wealth and Christian affection. Small, in comparison with the other nations of the earth,—she vies with the greatest in all the nobler distinctions of humanity. Look to her Church! enshrined in the holy affections of her people, and dispensing blessings unto all. Like Mount Zion, it “is beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole land.” Look to the veneration and respect in which the Scriptures of Truth are held by her children! The word of the living God is “the glory in the midst of her”—it is the *Shechinah*—the visible token of the presence of the invisible God, abiding with her. Mark how the Sabbath of the Lord is sanctified in that land! How calm and peaceful, *there*, is that blessed day! It is *there*, a day of rest and holy meditation. There is not the noise and stir and idleness which we are forced often to witness in this land. Man ceases, *there*, from his labour, and quits his secular amusements. The brute beast is at rest. Inanimate nature seems to participate in the solemnity, and a peaceful repose settles on all the works of God. The very stillness of the scene disposes the heart of man to meditation and prayer; and from the scattered cottages the songs of praise ascend, with the early carols of the lark, to the gates of heaven. On that day, the sanctuary is open to the guilty—the living God holds communion with the humble and contrite heart—and the way of Salvation is made known to erring mortals

throughout the whole length and breadth of the land. Religion is not *there*, a thing of mere form—it finds its way to the heart. Its ordinances are not considered beneficial to one class of the community alone—all ranks, and conditions of men seek the way to Zion. At the summons of the Sabbath bell, her palaces and cottages pour out her population—all, eager for a little to leave the world and its cares behind them, and to enjoy those exalted pleasures which are to be found within the tabernacles of God. How still and peaceful falls the even of that blessed day! How holy and elevating are the exercises around the domestic altar, where the father, as the priest of God, with his family around him, offers their evening sacrifice!

" O Scotland! much I love thy tranquil dales:
But most on Sabbath eve, when low the sun
Slants through the upland copse, 'tis my delight,
Wandering, and stopping oft, to hear the song
Of kindred praise arise from humble roofs;
Or, when the simple service ends, to hear
The lifted latch, and mark the gray-hair'd man,
The father and the priest, walk forth alone
Into his garden-plot, or little field,
To commune with his God in secret prayer,—
To bless the Lord, that in his downward years
His children are about him."————

Mark! how anxious all classes of society are, to instil into the minds of the young, virtuous principles—to blend religious with intellectual education. Mark! that spirit of noble independence which makes

the poor spurn the boon of charity, so long as Providence blesses them with health and strength to win their bread. Mark! the feeling of mingled kindness and compassion which swells the hearts of the affluent towards the needy, and forbids them to turn the hungry beggar from the door. Mark! the salutary effects of our National Institutions in the virtuous character, and moral and religious habits of the people. These are the distinguishing characteristics of our Country. These, are the Nation's safe-guards, the bulwarks that her Church hath reared around her, and which, with a holy activity and zeal, she endeavours to keep in repair. Can we forget these interesting peculiarities of our country? O never while memory holds her seat. Can we forget our Zion, or raise an impious hand against Her, to whose zeal for the nation's welfare, our best blessings may be traced? O surely never, so long as we continue to value these blessings, and our minds are not obscured by prejudice, nor misled by the delusions of a spurious liberality.

But, as we have already remarked, we have much reason to fear, amidst the prevailing excitement, that we may be so carried away by the specious but ill founded speculations of visionary theorists, as to join in an attack on those institutions which time hath rendered venerable, and which the blessings they have conferred on mankind ought to have made sacred. But although we may forget the duty which, as

Scotchmen and Christians, we owe to our National Church, we have no cause for alarm for the Church itself. She stands on an immoveable foundation—"God is in the midst of her for a defence"—"she has salvation for walls and for bulwarks"—"as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God : God will establish it forever." The unprincipled violence with which she has been assailed, hath aroused into activity her latent energies, and rooted her more deeply in the affections of the people. Our hostility may revive the drooping spirits of her prostrate foes, and tempt them to prolong for a moment, the unavailing contest with all the malignant hate, which conscious weakness and disgrace inspires—it may furnish them with another arrow, which, with the collected energies of despair, they may discharge against her, but it will fall pointless from her shield.

Although in so far as it will affect the security of our national establishments, our opposition will be as contemptible as it would be ungrateful ; yet it would certainly be attended with the most unhappy consequences to ourselves. It would retard the extension of those blessings to the rising settlements of this country, which were confided to our National Churches, not for the benefit of Great Britain only, but of every country where her laws are established and her children are to be found. Whatever may be the defects of our religious establishments, and in so far as they are hu-

man institutions they may, in some respects be deficient; yet it must be allowed that they have not only been directly instrumental in conveying the most substantial blessings to mankind, but by their systematic operations also, they have given a unity of purpose to the public mind, and put some restraint on the diversified schemes of improvement, which, without some such bias, would be directed by changing circumstances and the chances of success; and, having no connection with each other, would inevitably give rise to the most lamentable distractions, and lead to the most deplorable results. If, therefore, we should make a successful attempt to keep out of the land, the influence of those religious establishments which have been so abundantly blessed in all their legitimate operations, we have reason to fear that the moral advantages they have conferred upon others may never be ours. We cannot reasonably expect any ordinary blessing without the application of the appointed means: if the scion be not planted in the soil, it will be vain to look for the fruits of the tree. I confess I do not perceive the truth of the assertion, that "all old institutions, are utterly inapplicable to the habits and genius of the people of a new country, and will certainly fail of producing the same effects as formerly they did." A sound philosophy would teach us another lesson. True wisdom would avail itself of the experience of past ages. Christian prudence, would not fail to lay hold of those local

associations, which would give the dictates of religion a firmer hold of the human heart. I cannot, therefore, help thinking it a most unwise policy, that would destroy the distinctions that exist in religion, and would hail it as a triumph worthy an enlightened age, that every sect and party, let their principles be what they may, should enjoy equal immunities. We would deplore, any interference with the rights of conscience. We would unqualifiedly condemn every attempt to force the opinions of mankind into an unnatural channel. But while the liberty of exercising the judgment, should be left to all, and protected with sacred care, we deny that all classes and sects are equally entitled to public countenance and support. It is not a matter of indifference, what religion a man may profess, provided he is sincere. Such a doctrine would sanction some of the most atrocious crimes that have stained the pages of history, and would speedily break down the defences of social order. There are opinions in religion held and propagated, even in these days, (which are said to be enlightened) destructive of the peace and order of society! Are they who hold such opinions to be countenanced and encouraged by a Christian State? Are we, by any obligations, moral or religious, to symbolize with them? Are tenets at variance with the word of God, to be countenanced to a degree equal to those that are founded on that word and accordant to its dictates? This is surely more than any man, who has a just

perception of "natural rights," would demand—yet this is what they, who are tainted with the false liberality of the times, vauntingly promulgate as a sovereign panacea for all our wrongs,—and yet, if this should fail of its blissful effects, fruitful in expedients, they have another in reserve equally monstrous, viz. to withdraw altogether, public provision for the support of religion. Wrapt in the bewildering vapours of vague generalities, they are carried away, as it were, on the wings of the wind, and assume as many fantastic aspects, as the clouds in the firmament. Let them descend from their aerial heights, and tell us in the plain language of ordinary men, that all opinions in religion, whether true or false, which men may choose to adopt, are equally entitled to respect and support—or that they are equally worthy of our contempt; and then, if they will continue to deceive themselves with the absurd dogma of "equal rights," they will no longer hoodwink well intentioned men. It is *Truth*, that is the great agent in the moral transformation of the world; and to its dictates we are bound to pay the most sacred deference—it is *Truth* alone, that ought to be supported: it is the absence of *Truth* alone, that ought to be discountenanced. And, setting aside the paramount obligation of every Christian state to promote the religion of the Gospel, by making ample provision for its ministrations, as the ordinances of God—we maintain on the principles of common justice and sound policy, that provision should be made

by every State, for the support and encouragement of religion, as the only sure foundation of social order and happiness. The provision thus made, would be but a just equivalent for the acknowledged benefits, which the diffusion of sound and healthy religious opinions confer on a community ; while the experience of every age, testifies that it is the most economical method of securing the public peace and prosperity.

Here, no doubt, we will be met with the question, put with an air of triumph and wonderful self-gratulation,—“what is *Truth* ?” Where amongst the many sects and denominations that exist, is it to be found ? Who are they, whom heaven has highly favoured, by committing to *them*, this precious deposit ; that earth may also honour them with part of its substance ? It is sufficient to reply, that there is such a thing as *Truth*, and we must entertain low views of the character of God indeed, if we could suppose, that there is no way by which we could come at the knowledge of *that*, which he hath set up as the standard of opinion—that we should be destined to remain forever in ignorance of the only principle, by which our hearts can be renewed and our condition improved. The *Truth*, commends itself to every man’s conscience. “It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off : it is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it ? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou

shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."* Our Divine Redeemer thus addresses his Father in behalf of his people, "sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."† The knowledge of the truth, then, is attainable; and we may rest assured that if we seek it aright, we will not seek it in vain. God will open the eyes of our understandings that we may understand the scriptures: he will incline our hearts to obey their dictates.

Unquestionably it is the duty of every Christian state, as well as of every individual, to seek the truth, and to make it the foundation of all their public proceedings—the sole test of their opinions. We maintain, therefore, that the only just principle upon which State countenance and support can be extended to any religious body, is that their tenets have been deliberately judged as worthy of such support, because according to the mind of God as revealed in his word.

It is upon this ground, that our Church prefers a claim, to a just proportion of the public funds appropriated to the support of religion. And the deplorable condition of many of our countrymen in Canada,

* Deut. xxx. 11—14.

† John xvii. 17

with respect to the means of religious instruction, shews, that this claim, is founded on an enlightened regard for the best interests of the country, as well as on equity. But in advancing it, she does not demand for herself exclusive regard. She does not arrogantly pretend to hold alone the doctrines of truth in their purity—but her standards, “agreeable to the word of God” and “ratified by law”—Her history resplendent with instances of an unconquerable adherence to the truths of God as revealed in the Scriptures—and the signal benefits she has conferred upon the country, demonstrate that Her’s is no unjust claim. Let others make their title good to national protection and support—and that many sects of dissenters, as well as the established churches of the empire, may do this we will not deny—and we would rejoice to see that aid extended to them which their necessities require. But that all sects—the most visionary enthusiasts, the wildest fanatics, as well as those who preach the “words of truth and of soberness,” should be countenanced and supported by the State, is a proposition, too monstrous to be seriously advanced,—while to anticipate happy results from the withdrawal of all public provision, for the support of religion is what neither past experience nor the word of God warrants us to do. It would be *unchristianizing* the State—it would be renouncing allegiance to the King of kings—it would be betraying the best interests of mankind to the miserable dogmas of political expedi-

ency, to refuse National support and protection to the ministrations of religion. And we need not look far to be convinced, that (though by the blessing of God, much pure christianity might be found in the land,) the most disgusting fanaticism, and as its consequence, the most deplorable infidelity would be the genuine effects of such national defection to the laws of heaven. They must have forgotten their Zion—for-gotten the fundamental principles of her constitution, before they would attempt to substitute such crude speculations, for the sound practical wisdom of the venerable Fathers of our Church.

I.—Nor can they appropriate the language of the text, who fail to assert their rights, and to maintain, with the unsubdued firmness of their forefathers, the claims of their national church, to a just portion of the public provision made for the support of religion. Unwillingly would I make any observation, that would in the slightest degree wound the feelings of any one, but fidelity compels me to say, that the best interests of the country have been betrayed, by a shameful neglect of the religious education of the people. How many thousands, scattered in the wilds of Canada, are deprived of religious ordinances! How many of our Countrymen are perishing for lack of knowledge! Can it be a wise policy that would neglect the religious instruction of such a numerous and influential class, as the Scottish Colonists are—or would fail to employ

as agents in the moral improvement of the country, those tender and powerful associations, which link religion with the best feelings of the heart? The spiritual destitution of many of our Countrymen, which, in their present circumstances, they are unable to remedy, appeals loudly to every patriotic heart; yet the appeal has not been heard by those whose duty it was to alleviate, if they could not have prevented the evil. That liberal support which a wise and enlightened policy would have dictated, has hitherto been denied. The paltry and partial pittance, that has been granted from a precarious source, has been given rather as a *placebo* to their importunity, than from a regard to their best interests. Their claims acknowledged by the highest legal authorities of the empire to be just, have met with the most ungenerous opposition, from men high in influence and power. While the dishonour thus done to their Country, and the wrongs inflicted on their Church, have been endured with the most unaccountable apathy by the more influential portion of our Countrymen. How unlike the spirit of the Fathers and founders of our Church! They nobly sacrificed their personal interests, for the benefit of posterity and the extension of true religion. And can we, ingloriously witness the infraction of our rights?—not till we have forgotten their example—till we have forgotten what is due to ourselves—till we have forgotten what our country and our God demand from us. Before such supineness can steal over our souls, the noble

sentiment, so pathetically expressed in our text, must have been withered and destroyed.

II.—We forget our Zion also, when, from improper motives, we forsake the Church of our Fathers, and abandon those forms of worship, associated with the recollections of all that is dear to us. No Scotchman, however high may be his respect for other modes of faith, needs be ashamed of the pure, the simple, the sublime forms, according to which his forefathers were accustomed to worship the Living God. Admitting the Revealed Word of God, as the only infallible rule of faith and manners; and acknowledging the Holy Spirit, promised unto all who wait upon God in the way of his own appointment, as the only infallible interpreter of that word—their mode of worship was truly scriptural, strictly conformed to the rule of our Divine Lord, “they that worship the Father must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Unless, therefore, they reject this fundamental principle, or can shew that our Church has widely departed from it, they who forsake her communion, evidently set a higher value on the attractive inventions of men, than on the sterner, but higher qualities of simplicity and truth. They must forget the lofty requirements of religion, as well as the delightful scenes of their early days—the holy example of their parents—and the pious lessons they endeavoured to impress upon their young hearts before they can seriously and deliber-

ately do, what manifests contempt for the one and implies disrespect to the memory of the others.

The reproach has often been cast on our countrymen, that when they leave their native homes, they forget the noble characteristics of their country, and would fain conceal that they are Scotchmen. If this were true, their country might well disown them. But the scenes we have witnessed this day—the honour that has been paid to the land we love—and the enthusiastic ardour that glows in your bosoms repel the slanderous assertion. Yet it must be confessed, and it is deeply to be regretted, that in their conduct, too many exhibit a facility in trimming their sails to the favouring breezes of fashion and popularity even in matters of religion, that says but little for their consistency, less for their piety. Religion is of paramount importance to man. Every thing that belongs to it should be seriously pondered, and treated with the utmost reverence. Even its external forms—its non-essentials—are not to be assumed or laid aside, at the caprice of the individual, or to suit the fashion of the day; for with these are often associated those early recollections that endear it to the heart. It is what no man of proper feeling would do. But we ought not to think, though the simple and pure form of Church worship which we observe, justly commands our highest veneration and esteem, that, therefore, we ought to look upon all who have left that form, as

apostates. If the change was made purely and entirely from a conviction that these forms were not in accordance with the Scriptures of Truth, we would be compelled to honour such men—we would recognize in their conduct the principles and spirit of the Old Reformers—we would hail them the champions of *true* liberty. But if it was for any worldly purpose, that they forsook the bosom of the Church in which they were “nourished and brought up”—if it was from ambition, vanity, or pride, they will only meet that contempt, which the levity of their minds, or the laxity of their principles justly merits—they will be despised, for prostituting the best of all blessings, to the basest of all purposes—for making *that* subservient to their worldly aggrandizement, which was given them by God, to raise them above the things of this world, and direct and lead them to the imperishable honours and felicity of heaven.

III.—They also forget Zion, who have cast off all sense of religion ; or who, retaining the name of Christians, have abandoned the distinctive characteristics of a disciple of Christ Jesus. Religion adorns and dignifies the human character : the want of it sullies and degrades it. There has been nothing for which Scotland has been more distinguished than the religious habits of her people. In this respect she stands pre-eminent among the nations of the earth. It was her Church that raised her to this imposing

station ; and nothing can more strongly testify to the importance of religious institutions, than the melancholy fact, that many, when removed from the salutary influence they exert, become insensible to the invaluable blessings which religious ordinances confer, and abandon the services of the sanctuary entirely. Had they remained in the land where almost every thing around them reminded them continually of their duty to God ; and where remissness in its performance is stamped with infamy, they might have continued to lead an exemplary life, in respect to external observances. But if (like the captive Jews when carried to a strange land and surrounded with idolatrous influences,) they are removed from their native home and exposed to the temptations of the world, without the salutary restraints of public opinion and holy example to counteract their power, they soon manifest an utter indifference to religious privileges. They desert the courts of the Lord's house. They long for the return of the Sabbath, not that they may appear before God in the sanctuary, but that they may have an opportunity of indulging those idle and dissipated pleasures which have a fearful tendency to make them forget God and eternity—to make them forget the scenes of their early days—and the consequences of such impiety both to themselves and to the community at large. Let each one of us, my Brethren, examine, whether we are not, in this respect, in some degree criminal. To be guilty, it is not

necessary that we may belong to no Church—make no religious profession—observe no religious duty—though even to this awful extent many in this city are criminal; but we may suffer the most trifling matters, to interfere with our more important duties. Have we then taken every opportunity of engaging in those services that are confessedly salutary to our souls? Or, have we no need of the blessings of religion, that we are indifferent about them? Have we no occasion for those means, which God hath himself appointed, and freely offers to our acceptance, in order to promote our progress in holiness and lead us to heaven? Let us reflect that by such criminal negligence, we are inflicting an incalculable evil upon society—upon the church of Christ, as well as upon ourselves. “The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.”*

IV.—Although we may embrace every opportunity afforded us of engaging in acts of devotion, and cling, in a distant land, with unsubdued enthusiasm to our National Church, yet we may be apostates to all that is essential in religion. There is nothing in external observances intrinsically holy,—nothing that can impart to the worshipper a greater meetness for heaven.

* Lamentations i. 4.

They make no part of moral purity, nor will they compensate for the want of it. They are instruments merely, which God hath promised abundantly to bless. Their design is to promote holiness—to make men fear and love God, and feel their dependence upon him—to enkindle and cherish in their hearts the flame of gratitude, and make them devoted to his service. If they are performed without any view to their moral influences—if the presence of God be not realized—if we present not ourselves before his throne of grace with broken and contrite hearts, and in humble dependence on the merits of our Divine Redeemer, however solemnly and regularly we may engage in the external acts of worship, we can experience nothing of the power of religion. In the strict observance of all its formalities we will, in reality, be just as far from the “city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” as the Jews were from the earthly Jerusalem, when they were captives by the streams of Babylon.

Finally.—Whatever it may be with any one of us in these respects, our text is strictly applicable to us all, in respect to the relation which our earthly condition bears to the “Jerusalem above.” As sinners, we are all exiled from our native home, where the presence of the living God was vouchsafed and communion with him enjoyed. We are now the captives of Satan and of sin. This world in which we dwell is an idolatrous land. Its vanities engross the affections of the heart.

The "creature is served more than the Creator." The living and the true God is not remembered but in the heart of the faithful Israelite, and he is remembered with intense sorrow—for his worship has ceased, and the homage of holy affection no longer ascends before him as the morning and evening sacrifice. He grieves for the abominations that are done in the land, and he eagerly longs for the time when the days of his captivity shall end, and he shall be permitted to return to the "Holy City"—when he shall mingle with the worshippers around the throne, and be blessed with the presence of his King and his God. Fain would he soar away from this world of sin and of strife, for in it he feels no security. Many temptations surround him. Many solicitations do his enemies present, to cause him to make his religion subservient to worldly delight—"Sing us one of the songs of Zion," they say with insulting mockery; but he nobly replies, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

Let me then, ask you, my Brethren, in the spirit of pastoral affection, is it thus you feel, and nobly resolve? Do you feel that you are the captives of sin, and that your chains are galling? Do you look with a holy indignation on the abominations that prevail in this world of sin and death? Do you feel that the cares

of life, and the pleasures of sin, are apt to withdraw your heart from God? Do you prefer pure and undefiled religion above your chief joy? Are the sacred song remembered by you, which in prophetic strains told of the glories of the gospel day, when the true light, warm from the source of immortality, should pour its influence on the dwellings of men, and scatter the darkness of the tomb? Do you recall with delight, the promises of deliverance from your spiritual thralldom? Do you eagerly look forward to the time when your chains shall be broken, and you shall be suffered to go free? Do you endeavour to acquire a loftier desire after the enjoyment of God in heaven above? Or, is every christian hope extinguished, every noble desire uprooted from your heart? Have you forgotten your Zion—forgotten all that your God and your country claims at your hands? We trust better things of you, my Brethren. We hope that there are many faithful sons in our Israel,—many whose hearts glow with the piety and zeal of their forefathers,—many whose supreme wish is to see the blessings of religion spread over this land,—many who are ready to emulate the deeds of those who founded their National Church, in preserving it from rude and reckless hands. When its foundation stone was laid, it was a season of dread struggle with the powers of darkness—a season of persecution and of blood. The red banner of slaughter, and the sword of destruction, spread the horrors of death over Scotland's realms. The chosen band saw

the storm gather, but they stood collected in the might of the Lord of hosts. Their all on earth was at stake ; but they looked beyond this transient scene. They embraced a righteous cause, and they embarked every thing that was dear to them in its accomplishment. They fought for their civil and religious liberties—for their homes, their altars, and their Church, and these they bequeathed with their last prayers on the field of true glory, or returned with victory for conscience, and their beloved land. They were driven by the arm of power from their peaceful homes and their temples ; but they made the dens and caves of the earth their homes, and the cradle of our liberties—they made the heath their pillow—the canopy of heaven their covering—and nature's wide expanse their temple. The solitary moors, and lonely hill sides of their native land, they consecrated to the service of Jehovah ; and the praises of their God arose on the mountain breezes, and their valleys re-echoed the songs of Zion. They have left an heritage to their children, both at home and in other climes, of rights of conscience, and of a worship simple, but divine, that has shed a halo of glory over the land—that has cheered the saint in the pilgrimage of life—soothed him on the bed of death—and threw the light of a glorious immortality on his future destiny.

They have left us a bright example ! Let us shew that we are sons worthy of those who have gone be-

fore us! He who remembers not with gratitude and veneration, the blessings they have been instrumental in conveying to posterity, is a degenerate branch of a noble stem. Neither the patriotism nor the piety of his forefathers animates his soul—he has forgotten his country—he has forgotten his Zion—and it would be well for his memory, that his defection was consigned to deeper oblivion. Let another spirit, and other deeds be ours, my Countrymen! Let us follow the steps of those who have gone before us, with the same undaunted heart, and resolute perseverance. Let us cling with the same attachment to that venerable church, to which, by the blessing of heaven, we owe so much. Let the christian spirit which she breathes, and the holy practice which she inculcates be ours. Her purity, can only be sullied by the moral defection of her children,—let not us put the stain of reproach on her sacred name. Let us cherish those associations, which give greater strength to the bond of brotherly love, and which have been found so highly instrumental in keeping alive the sense of religion in the heart. But above all, my Brethren! let us frequently, and fervently intercede with God for our Zion. It is the prayers and piety of her children, that constitute her strength. It was this, that made her victorious over her enemies in times past. It is this, that will preserve her in every peril in times to come. It was not in an “arm of flesh” her fathers trusted. They invoked the merciful interposition of heaven. Whether danger threatened,

or defection grieved, it was at a throne of grace, they told their fears, and expressed their sorrows. By this means they supported their courage, and cherished the fond love they bore her. Let it be from the same sacred source we refresh our patriotism—at the same holy altar, we light the torch of piety and zeal.

My Brethren! my Friends! from whatever country you have come—a common feeling of love and veneration for the Church of Scotland, should pervade the hearts of you all. Though specially dear to every lover of his country, there are many considerations which entitle her to the favourable regard of every good man.

To you, my German Brethren! she owes a debt of gratitude. She was nursed in your country's bosom. Among you, the most illustrious of her fathers found an asylum, when they were driven by the arm of power from their peaceful homes. In your colleges, they imbibed those great principles of civil and religious liberty, which they transfused into their own institutions. The lamp which she lighted at your altars, shines with more than original brightness, and now reflects its rays to your father-land. In the mysterious evolutions of Providence, as if to repay the good you have done her, she seems the instrument destined to preserve your country from the evils, which a false philosophy would inflict upon it, by checking

its wild speculations with the stern facts of a severe system of metaphysics, and tempering the glare of philological discovery, with the principles of a sound theology—concentrating the rainbow hues of science, into one efflux of bright but undazzling light.

My Brethren of England ! you owe her much. Her patriots, and her martyrs, contributed not a little, to lay the platform of that constitution, of which we may in common proudly boast, and the blessings and benefits of which, we intimately feel. May God grant they may be felt by posterity, till the latest generations. The interests of both our religious establishments, are so closely entwined, that the ruin of the one, will be the downfall of the other. That which brings peace and prosperity to the one, will cause the other to flourish and rejoice. The greatest evil we have to dread, is the spirit of discord and jealousy between the members of the Sister Churches. Then, far be it from us—let us nip in the bud every thing that would produce it.

My Brethren of Ireland ! has she done nothing for you?—She feels a sympathy with your woes. She would heal the distractions which have long banished happiness from your own lovely Isle, that seems by nature intended for its abode ; and the healing balm she would apply is the Gospel of peace. She has received those among you, into communion and fellow-

ship with herself, who own the same doctrine, and observe the same forms of worship. She attempts to bring the truth of the Gospel home to your hearts through the medium of your native tongue, and one of the most distinguished of her sons attunes your "Shamrock-wreathed Harp" to the holy lays of Zion.* The hand of enlightened christian charity she extends to all.

Bound thus together, my Brethren, by mutual acts of kindness and good will, never let there be strife between us. Let not Ephraim envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim. Let there be no rivalry between us, but to promote one another's comfort and

* I allude to the generous exertion, now brought nearly to a successful termination, of an amiable and excellent man—the Rev. N. McLeod, D. D., Minister of St. Columba's Church, Glasgow, and present Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland—to give to the Irish peasantry a metrical version of the Psalms, in their native tongue. He had beheld, with the eye of a Christian philosopher, the fondness of his own countrymen (the Highlanders) for poetry and song, and resolved to turn this predilection to their moral benefit. Perceiving many of their favorite pieces had a tendency to cherish the fierce and implacable spirit of a rude and barbarous age, he conceived that if their wild music could be made to flow in strains of Divine mercy and love, the result would be highly beneficial. He made the attempt: the success was beyond his utmost anticipation. Observing a kindred spirit in the Irish peasantry, he studied the idioms of their language with a view of bestowing on them a similar benefit. His labours, so far as they have proceeded, are crowned with great success. The Irish newspapers have been warm in praise, both of the elegance and fidelity of the specimens of the version that have been submitted to public inspection, and speak of the eagerness of the people to obtain a complete copy of a book of which they have had such a delightful foretaste. May God grant, that the work may be attended with all the advantages that the Reverend philanthropist expects, and every sincere lover of Ireland can desire to flow from it.

usefulness. As when fellow soldiers in the armies of our earthly King—God save him—our countrymen contended as brethren, with equal honour in the same cause, let us still contend side by side, in the cause of truth, of virtue, and religion. The great object of our meeting this day, is, by cherishing the pleasing remembrance of our native homes, to give greater strength to our bond of brotherly love, and kindly feeling. Let the warm emotions of enthusiastic affection, wither every root of bitterness. You are brethren and friends—many of you affluent—all placed by Providence in comfortable circumstances—but the poor and the needy, we have still with us. Let them not be forgotten in the day of our gladness. They are from the land we love. Knowing your habitual generosity, I have no need to say more. I leave, with the utmost confidence, your charitable offerings, to the dictates of your own hearts.

In taking my leave of you at this time, let me remind you, that the happiness of many will depend on the manner you act—that the prosperity of the earthly Zion will be increased or diminished, by the manner in which you will conduct yourselves. Must we fear that the beauty of Zion, which has shed the light of the Gospel on the kingdoms from which we came, is but as a fair dream, that has vanished from our remembrance—that the scenes of another land have obliterated the impressions of our early days—that

our absence from the Jerusalem, when our Fathers appeared as the sons of God, has spread the mantle of oblivious night, on a day that shall never return to us? Forbid it every honest feeling of the heart!—forbid it heaven!

" Long be our Father's temple ours ;
 Wo to the hand by which it falls !
 A thousand spirits watch its towers,
 A cloud of Angels, guard its walls,
 And be *their* shield by us possessed,
 Lord, rear around thy blest abode,
 The buttress of a holy breast—
 The rampart of a present Gon."

May the peace of God, which passeth understanding, keep your hearts through Jesus Christ. Amen.